

Accompanying Documents

Accompanying this Amendment are the following documents:

(1) Marked-up copy of the specification and claims; showing the amendments made herein; and

(2) Currently pending claim set, incorporating the amendments made herein.

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AMENDMENT

In the Title:

Please replace the current Title with the following Title:

-- METHOD FOR PREPARING HCV E2 BINDING PROTEIN--

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 4, 10 and 17 as follows:

4. (Four times amended) A process for the preparation of a protein having a molecular weight of about 24kd which specifically binds to the E2 protein of hepatitis C virus, or for the preparation of a functionally equivalent fragment thereof, comprising the steps of:

- i) contacting cells with a preparation of E2;
- ii) obtaining a membrane preparation from cells exhibiting binding to E2; and
- iii) purifying said protein from said preparation.

10. (Three times amended) A process for the preparation of a protein having a molecular weight of about 24kd which specifically binds to the E2 protein of hepatitis C virus, or a functionally equivalent fragment thereof, comprising the steps of:

- i) contacting mammalian cells with a preparation of E2;
- ii) obtaining a membrane preparation from the mammalian cells selected for binding to E2;

iii) precipitating the preparation with ammonium sulphate at less than 33% saturation and retaining the supernatant;

iv) precipitating the supernatant with ammonium sulphate at between 33 and 50% saturation and retaining the precipitate;

v) resuspending the precipitate from step iv) in buffer and subjecting the resuspended precipitate to hydrophobic interaction chromatography.

17. (Twice amended) A diagnostic kit comprising a protein having a molecular weight of about 24 kd, which specifically binds to the E2 protein of hepatitis C virus, or a functionally equivalent fragment thereof.

Please add the following new claims:

--21. (New) A method for preparing a protein having a molecular weight of about 24kd which specifically binds to the E2 protein of hepatitis C virus, or for preparing a functionally equivalent fragment thereof, comprising the steps of:

- i) obtaining a membrane preparation from cells that bind to E2; and
- ii) purifying said protein from said preparation.

22. (New) A method for preparing a protein having a molecular weight of about 24kd which specifically binds to the E2 protein of hepatitis C virus, comprising the steps of:

- i) obtaining a membrane preparation from mammalian cells that bind to E2;
- ii) adding ammonium sulphate to said preparation at less than 33% saturation to produce a precipitate and a supernatant;
- iii) adding ammonium sulphate to said supernatant at between 33 and 50% saturation and retaining the precipitate;
- iv) resuspending the precipitate from step iii) in buffer and subjecting the resuspended precipitate to hydrophobic interaction chromatography; and
- v) recovering said protein.

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23. The process of claim 22 wherein said mammalian cells are MOLT-4 cells.--

In the Title:

Please replace the current Title with the following Title:

--METHOD FOR PREPARING HCV E2 BINDING PROTEIN--

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."